

Prediction of Violence History in Substance-Abusing Inmates

This study examines the relationship of various developmental factors, drug abuse history, and current adjustment with history of violent criminal activity in 183 drug-abusing inmates. The purpose is to determine factors that discriminate among offenders who (a) have no history of violent criminal behavior, (b) have a history of violent criminal behavior but have never attempted or committed murder, and (c) have attempted or committed murder. Inmates who have attempted or committed murder committed their first crime, on average, as preadolescents, whereas inmates who have not committed violent crimes committed their first crime, on average, in their midteens. A history of torturing animals as a child is predictive of membership in the murder or attempted murder group. Inmates who attempted or committed murder were raised in families considerably more deviant than families of the other two groups. Finally, commission of violent crimes is associated with a higher current level of anxiety.